

My name is Mellody Massaquoi and I live in New Haven, CT . I am testifying in support of S.B. 1095: An Act Concerning School Resource Officers.

I've been part of NHPS from Pre K to 12th Grade. In that time I've seen many things. I have seen my fellow classmates get criminalized, I have seen the lines between the school to prison pipeline get even more blurred. I've seen my fellow students patted down and searched everyday, with a fear of being harmed by the cruel justice system before they could get to first period. What I haven't seen were enough social workers, therapists and nurses to help students on a daily basis. I haven't seen true safety. I haven't seen transformative justice, Especially not for Black and Brown Youth nor for LGBTQIA+ youth.

All students deserve to feel safe, secure, and supported in their places of learning. Yet too often our schools rely on policing to keep children in line, rather than funding professionals trained to deliver students necessary developmental and behavioral health resources.

According to research by [Connecticut Voices for Children](#), there's no evidence School Resource Officers (SROs) make students or staff safer, but schools with SROs have more arrests and more expulsions than their peer institutions without SROs.

I strongly support S.B. 1095. I hope the Committee and Connecticut lawmakers will vote in favor of this bill. Together, we can build an educational system that centers students' social-emotional well-being through care, resources, learning, and restoration.

Thank you for your time,

Mellody Massaquoi